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- 17.—*Snow-Bound. A Winter Idyl.* By JOHN GREENLEAF WHITTIER. Boston: Ticknor and Fields. 1866. 16mo. pp. 52.

At the close of his poem Mr. Whittier utters a hope that it may recall some pleasant country memories to the overworked slaves of our great cities, and that he may deserve those thanks which are all the more grateful that they are rather divined by the receiver than directly expressed by the giver. The reviewer cannot aspire to all the merit of this confidential privacy and pleasing shyness of gratitude, but he may fairly lay claim to a part of it, inasmuch as, though obliged to speak his thanks publicly, he need not do it to the author's face. We are again indebted to Mr. Whittier, as we have been so often before, for a very real and a very refined pleasure. The little volume before us has all his most characteristic merits. It is true to Nature and in local coloring, pure in sentiment, quietly deep in feeling, and full of those simple touches which show the poetic eye and the trained hand. Here is a New England interior glorified with something of that inward light which is apt to be rather warmer in the poet than the Quaker, but which, blending the qualities of both in Mr. Whittier, produces that kind of spiritual picturesqueness which gives so peculiar a charm to his verse. There is in this poem a warmth of affectionate memory and religious faith as touching as it is uncommon, and which would be altogether delightful if it did not remind us that the poet was growing old. Not that there is any other mark of senescence than the ripened sweetness of a life both publicly and privately well spent. There is fire enough, but it glows more equably and shines on sweeter scenes than in the poet's earlier verse. It is as if a brand from the camp-fire had kindled these logs on the old homestead's hearth, whose flickering benediction touches tremulously those dear heads of long ago that are now transfigured with a holier light. The father, the mother, the uncle, the school-master, the uncanny guest, are all painted in warm and natural colors, with perfect truth of detail and yet with all the tenderness of memory. Of the family group the poet is the last on earth, and there is something deeply touching in the pathetic sincerity of the affection which has outlived them all, looking back to before the parting, and forward to the assured reunion.

But aside from its poetic and personal interest, and the pleasure it must give to every one who loves pictures from the life, "*Snow-Bound*" has something of historical interest. It describes scenes and manners which the rapid changes of our national habits will soon have made as remote from us as if they were foreign or ancient. Already, alas! even in farm-houses, backlog and forestick are obsolescent words, and close

mouthed stoves chill the spirit while they bake the flesh with their grim and undemonstrative hospitality. Already are the railroads displacing the companionable cheer of crackling walnut with the dogged self-complacency and sullen virtue of anthracite. Even where wood survives, he is too often shut in the dreary madhouse cell of an air-tight, round which one can no more fancy a social mug of flip circling than round a coffin. Let us be thankful that we can sit in Mr. Whittier's chimney-corner and believe that the blaze he has kindled for us shall still warm and cheer, when a wood fire is as faint a tradition in New as in Old England.

We have before had occasion to protest against Mr. Whittier's carelessness in accents and rhymes, as in pronouncing "ly'ceum," and joining in unhallowed matrimony such sounds as *awn* and *orn*, *ents* and *ence*. We would not have the Muse emulate the unidiomatic preciseness of a Normal schoolmistress, but we cannot help thinking that, if Mr. Whittier writes thus on principle, as we begin to suspect, he errs in forgetting that thought so refined as his can be fitly matched only with an equal refinement of expression, and loses something of its charm when cheated of it. We hope he will, at least, never mount Pegasus, or water him in Heli'con, and that he will leave Museum to the more vulgar sphere and obtuser sensibilities of Barnum. Where Nature has sent genius, she has a right to expect that it shall be treated with a certain elegance of hospitality.

18. — *Herman, or Young Knighthood.* By E. FOXTON. Boston: Lee and Shepard. 1866. 2 vols. 12mo.

THE rank of this book will be very differently estimated by different readers, according as it is judged by the pure canons of literary art, or by the rules of morals. The critical reader, whose artistic perceptions are keen, will be struck with defects in it, which the reader whose moral sympathies are active will overlook and utterly disregard, in view of the prevailing spirit and intention of the work. It is a true product of New England, in which art is wholly subordinated to moral purpose. It not only gives expression to sentiments and opinions characteristic of the intellectual and moral temper of New England, but it gives expression to them in a form not less characteristic of that temper. At the time the book was written and first printed, eight years ago, it required not only an enlightened but a courageous mind to form and to declare the opinions expressed in it. No popular magazine in the country would at that time have ventured to accept it for publica-